nature net

The NatureKenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org March 03

Darwin Initiative Monitoring Project

measuring the health of the environment

Paul Matiku and Fleur Ng'weno

Sixty Important Bird Areos - key sites for biodiversity conservation - have been identified in Kenya. Some of these sites may become degroded by human activities or climate change; others moy improve os hobitots for threotened species through good management or natural changes. It is important to measure these changes, and even more important to use the informotion to trigger oction or influence monagement.

Noture Kenyo is estoblishing and co-ordinating an effective, sustainable monitoring system at all IBAs. The three-yeor project is funded by the Darwin Initiative af the U.K., thraugh the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) - the British BirdLife Partner. The idea is to build the copocity of local communities ond Government agencies to track conditions at IBA sites, and feed back into improved site management, conservotion oction ond national reporting.

Partners are being trained in ecological survey, data management, management planning, project monogement and training skills. They in turn will troin and support a network of local people and government field staff. Particular focus will be on priority sites where community-based Site Support Groups are established. Next training workshop will run 5 - 8 March 03 at Noivosho.

Low costs and further fund-roising will secure long-term resource requirements. This, and continued RSPB support, is expected to produce a sustainable monitoring system. The programme will act as a model for applicotion by BirdLife Partners across Africa.

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OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Marich Pass

Friday 18 - Tuesday 23 April 03

The Marich Pass is a deep, rocky cleft carved where the Moruny river emerges from the Cherongani Hills onto the dry plains af the Lake Turkana Basin.

Two kilometres from here is the Marich Pass Field Studies Centre (MPFSC) from where this safari will be based. All meals and overnights will be at MPFSC. Facilities include lotrines and shawers and mattresses, mosquito nets and blankets are provided. Lighting is by kerosene lamps. There are two reliable stations in Ortum (20 kms from the Centre), selling petrol and diesel.

Marich Pass is at an altitude af 3000 ft. Birdlife in the area is prolific and in April, migrotion of poleorctic species should be ot its peok. Other activities that can be done from Morich include ethnobotany walks, visits to the Irrigation schemes of the Wei Wei Valley, hill wolking ond visits to the local market.

Marich is 520 kms from Nairobi, which tokes obout 8-9 hours drive. It is important we leave as early as possible from Noirobi, so os to get to the Centre before dark.

Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park at 7:00 for 7:15 a.m. departure.

All participant must be insured for medical and for evacuation.

Costs for 4 nights - inclusive of meals at Centre and guides

Per person sharing banda	8400/-
Per person camping	7300/-
Child sharing banda	5900/-
Minivan per person	7100/-

Minimum 12 persons

Book by 25 March '03

Friends of Kinangop Plateau, South, engaged in monitoring activty of Sharpe's Longclaw, the flagship species far Kinangap Grasslands IBA

Congratulations!

...to our colleagues, Dino Martins & Gordon Boy, for winning the Peter Jenkins East African Conservation Journalism Awards 2002.

Both are active members of Nature Kenya and we are happy to see recognition of their outstanding work.

Dino is the Nature Kenya Dudu Committee Chairman and works closely with the Invertebrate Zoology Department, National Museums of Kenya. Below are lists of work by Dino:

Photo from Swara

***Nature Net* The Nature Kenya Newsletter**

The Colobus Who Cried Wolf June 2001
Dance Circles July 2001
Chemical warfare August 2001
The Third Gift: A Christmas Story December 2001/ January 2002
She Sees with Sound March 2002
Pond Skaters: The Ripple Effect June 2002
Seeds with Wings October 2002

***Swara*, the magazine of the East African Wildlife Society**

A Walk in the Woods Vol. 22 (2)
The Wind in the Whistling Thorns Vol. 23 (2)
Denizens of the Dust Vol. 24 (1)
Flower Power Vol. 24 (2)
Along Came a Spider Vol. 24 (2)
Siafu! Vol. 24 (3)
The Birds and the Bees - and the Flowers Vol. 25 (1)
Wedded Forever- Fig Trees & Fig Wasps Vol. 25 (2)
All Yellow in Ngorongoro Vol. 25 (2)
In a Green Shade Vol. 25 (2)
Deceptive Guile Vol. 25 (2)
Pollen Overload Vol. 25 (2)
Insects and CITES Vol. 25 (3)
An Inordinate Fondness for Beetles Vol. 25 (3)

***Ecoforum*, published by Environment Liaison Centre International**

Unexplored Potential - Western Kenya's Kingwal Swamp Vol. 25 (4)
Jewel in the Dust Vol. 25 (4)
Please Save a Place for Pollinators Poster/Insert Vol. 25 (2)

March Sky, from The Safari Star Guide by Alex and Joy MacKay

EVENING SKY

By Alex and Ian MacKay and Fleur Ng'weno

As the Earth rotates, the stars and planets appear to move from east to west during the night. They also move from east to west over the course of the year. The information below is most accurate around 7-9 pm in March 2003.

Stars, March

The western sky is dominated by the constellation ORION. Near Orion in the south, almost overhead, is Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky. Below Sirius in the southern sky is Canopus, the second brightest star. The bright star Procyon follows Orion and Sirius across the sky.

North of Orion is the constellation TAURUS, the bull, The head of the bull is a V-shaped group of stars, with the red giant Aldebaran as the fiery eye.

The constellation LEO, the Lion, is high in the east. Look for a crescent of stars forming the lion's head and mane.

Planets, March 03

In the evening, the planet Jupiter is a brilliant golden light. On a clear, dark night, look at Jupiter through binoculars. You can see the moons that Galileo saw, called Io, Europa, Ganymede and Calisto. These large satellites orbiting Jupiter are fost moving and rapidly change their positions. Saturn is near Orion and Taurus

In the morning before sunrise, the brilliant light in the east is the planet Venus.

Moon, March

3 March *new moon;* 11 March *first quarter;* 18 Morch*full moon;* 25 March *last quarter.*

Sun, March

The equinox is on Morch 21 - equal length of doy ond night everywhere in the world.

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BirdLife International Visiting Scheme

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL

The BirdLife International Partnership owns or manages over 6,000 sites totalling 1,000,000 hectares worldwide. Many of these sites are internationally Important Bird Areas and host threatened species or important concentrations of birds.

The BirdLife Reserve visiting scheme allows all members of BirdLife Partner organisations free entrance or discount services in the reserves listed on the BirdLife International website www.birdlife.net on proof of a valid membership card.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museums' Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 16 March**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, *i.e.* **8 & 31 March from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the Arboretum gate. *Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **1 February, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person.

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month i.e. **15 March, at 4:00 p.m.** Please call Marlene Reid on (011) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks (Nairobi)

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **1 & 15 March, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

MARCH DIARY

Sat 1	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk
Sat 8	Dudu & Tree Walks at Arboretum
Sat 15	FFJ Birdwalk & NRF walk
Sun 16	Sunday Birdwalk
Sat 22 & Sun 23	Kereita Excursion
Mon 31	Tree Walk

Birdwolks every Wednesday Morning
Bird ringing every Thursday Morning

Bird Hotline
3749957

Green-backed Twinspot (ringed), *Arboretum, Nairabi/ Jan* Nairobi Ringing Group

Ferruginous Duck, *Thika Sewage Treatment Pands/ Jan* Sunday Birdwalk

Spotted Crake, *Nakuru N. Park/ Jan* Nicademus Nalianya, Muaki Kiaka & KWS staff

Spotted Redshank, Common Redshank, Tufted Duck, Gadwall, *Thika Sewage Treatment Pands/ Jan* Brian Finch, Itai Shanni

Woodchat Shrike, *KWS Hippo Camp, Naivasha/ Jan* Waterbird Caunts team

Fundamentals of Ornithology
A course for birders and bird guides
Elsamere Field Studies Centre, Lake Naivasha
28 April — 5 May 2003
Please find details in the Dec 02 - Jan 03 of *Nature net* or write to tba2@africaonline.co.ke

Community Guide to Environmental Issues
And to the Environmental Management and Co-ordination Act, 1999 ***by Environment Liaison Centre International***
Nairobi Guide available from Nature Kenya front office (while stocks last)

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu

FIELD ACTIVITIES

Wadudu walk

Arboretum
Sat 8 March 03, meet at the Arboretum gate at 10:30 a.m.

Lukenya Hill

an archeological site
15 March 03, meet at the Museum car park at 8:00 a.m.

The archeological sites, which date back to 40,000 years ago, were created by prehistoric hunters who exploited the large mammalian fauna in the savanna of the Athi-Kapiti plains.

For more information contact the Prehistory Club of Kenya
Palaeontology@wananchi.com

Kereita Forest

Camping at Gatamaiyu Fishing Camp

Sat 22 & Sun 23 March 03, meet at the Museum car park at noon on the Saturday

The Kikuyu Escarpment forests include Ragia, Kieni, Kamae, Kinale, Kereita, Uplands and Gatamaiyu forests and form the southern end of the forests covering the Aberdare or Nyandarua range of mountains. They are situated close to Nairobi on the eastern wall of the Great Rift Valley. The forests are home to a globally threatened forest starling, Abbott's Starling, several regionally threatened species, and a rich variety of highland forest birds.

This is a do-it-yourself camping trip and you need to bring your own tent, sleeping bag and any other gear you think necessary. Our hosts, the Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) will be arranging a basic dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday, you will need to bring food for Saturday and Sunday lunch. Water is scarce and you definately need to bring your own drinking water.

Book with payment of 300/- per person (child under 10, 150/-) at the Nature Kenya office, by 20 March 03.